# THE COMMONWEAL

*A Weekly Review of Literature, The Arts, and Public Affairs.*

Volume XII | New York, Wednesday, July 30, 1930 | Number 13



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## TABLE OF CONTENTS


Flirtations with Communism ..... 331
Week by Week ..... 332
Suffering the Little Ones ..... 335
Congress Home Folks ..... Adam Day 336
Judas (*verse*) ..... Theodore Maynard 338
Vision of Eternal Joy ..... H. A. Jules-Bois 339
Heroes and Martyrs ..... Hilaire Belloc 341
Fraternity ..... Mildred Plew Merryman 342
Intimations of Immortality ..... Paul Bussard 343
Communications ..... 344
The Screen ..... Richard Dana Skinner 345
Books ..... William Franklin Sands, Margaret Kendall, Grenville Vernon 346



Published weekly and copyrighted 1930, in the United States by the Calvert Publishing Corporation, Grand Central Terminal, New York, N. Y. United States: $5.00; Foreign: $6.00; Canada: $5.50. Single Copies: $.10.


# FLIRTATIONS WITH COMMUNISM

READERS of G. K. Chesterton's The Man Who Was Thursday—described by the author himself as "a nightmare"—may well be reminded of the farcical episodes of that fantastic tale by some of the recent developments in connection with the Congressional Committee which is investigating Communist activities in the United States. In Mr. Chesterton's story, it may be recalled, an agent of the special branch of the British police force which has been appointed to deal with anarchistic activities, secures a place on the inner council of the international Terrorists only to discover that all the other members are police agents like himself. They hold their secret meetings on a balcony overlooking a public square, acting on the theory that the best form of concealment of their deadly aims is to make them as ostentatious as possible, because in that case the public will think their plans for the destruction of society to be merely practical jokes.

Something of this Chestertonian spirit of paradox seems to have entered into the plans of the Fish Committee, when they decided to suspend their sessions until they had carried out a visitation of several Communist summer camps in New York state. According to the New York Times, which can hardly be suspected of jesting in connection with a news article, whatever its editors may say on the editorial page, "the exact hour of the arrival of the committee at the camps" was to be kept secret, as was also "the route by which the investigators are to travel, as they plan to appear at the camps unheralded. Because of the secrecy of the preparations, no arrangements have been made by the Communists for their reception. It was said, however, that the event would be just a friendly visit, although there was some speculation as to the attitude the Communists may take when the federal visitors arrive."

The Commonweal is not in a position to report what kind of a reception the Communists gave the investigators, however, as this paper is reluctantly obliged to go to press before the thrilling details can be read. Inasmuch however, as the Times and the other papers reporting this great stroke of strategy must probably reach the Communist camps many hours in advance of the federal investigators, it is doubtless to be expected that the "preparations" which the Communists made for the reception of the committeemen did not suffer for lack of due time for their preparation.

It would appear that the curiosity about the camps was aroused by Mr. Charles J. Wood, commissioner of


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conciliation of the Department of Labor, who testified that he found the camps to be "places where boys and girls are taught Bolshevist ideas to harden them for the revolutionary battles to come." Mr. Wood attempted to prove his case by stating that the word "please" is barred from use in the camps as belonging to counter-revolutionary terminology, "while politeness in general is regarded as bourgeois prejudice." If such a standard as this is to be applied to the measurement of the progress of Communism among our youth—and not merely our youth—it is likely that the number of Communists in our midst must be reckoned by millions instead of the few thousands so far identified with the movement.

It is seriously unfortunate that the problem of Communism should be connected in the public mind with such futile and childish pranks as this "secret" expedition to the summer camps of the American disciples of Lenin. A few more such developments, added to the general disfavor with which the suggestion of Mr. Elihu Root as to the formation of a special secret police to deal with Communism has been received, and it is likely that a problem which really requires realistic investigation will be dismissed from public attention as a joke that has ceased to be amusing.

The testimony given by the public school authorities in New York shows that the much heralded invasion of the schools by Communist propaganda, while potentially a menace, has by no means attained alarming proportions as yet. Mr. John J. O'Leary, the labor editor of the New York World, testified to the efforts of the Communists to foment strikes in various industries, but at the same time declared that their efforts had failed in such a way as to discredit the Communists among the workers themselves. Similar testimony was given by Mr. James Oneal, a Socialist leader, who has closely investigated Communist activities, in a letter to Chairman Fish. Mr. Oneal declares that American Communism is now at the lowest point in its history, both from the point of view of membership and influence. It is probable that the most useful work which the Congressional Committee could do would be to bring out the truth concerning the Amtorg Trading Corporation, the Soviet commercial agency in the United States, which has been directly accused by former Commissioner of Police Whalen, and also by the former Soviet diplomat, George Bessedobsky, in a statement given to the United Press in Paris, of having for its real business the financing and directing of subversive Communist activities in this country.

The investigation of the Amtorg, no matter what it might prove as to the particular point involved, might direct attention to the paradoxical situation created by those great American industries which for the sake of immediate profits are willing and indeed anxious to trade with Soviet Russia, and, in so doing, are aiding the Soviet system to establish itself firmly—not realizing, apparently, that the ultimate success of the Soviet system in Russia would inevitably destroy profit-making industries in other parts of the world. Are our industrialists prepared to pay the price for the sake of present extension of their business in Russia?

Meanwhile, in spite of the meagre results of the Fish Committee's investigation, it remains true that Communism does in fact constitute one of the major problems of our times. But it cannot be solved merely by abuse of Communism, or by the methods of the secret police. Those conditions which provide ammunition for the assault on our social system by the Communists can and should be cured by true coöperation among the leaders of society. Then the ground would be cut from under the advancing armies of Communism.

## WEEK BY WEEK

AS WE write, Washington has hardly gone further about its business than to commingle heat with oratory about the Naval Treaty, still awaiting ratification. To some persons the two things seem inseparable. At any rate shrewd reporters are of the opinion that, owing to record temperatures and a desire to leave the capital, ratification is just around the corner. Two forms of attack have absorbed the energies of the opposition. The first argued that the mere presence of "secret documents" indicated diplomatic juggling of a suspicious character; but in all likelihood even the most sleuthlike of the senators expected to find nothing more ghastly in the correspondence files than a juicy topic for further discussion. The second onslaught came from those who, like Senator Frederick Hale, are not satisfied with the extant majesty of the navy. Here the capitol's strategists went much farther than those admirals who had bitterly regretted the limited allotment of eight-inch gun cruisers. Far worse, said Senator Hale, "is the abandonment of the basic principle that each country shall have the right within the limitations of a category to build the type of ship it considers essential." Upon this principle the Senator set such great store that his confrères somewhat justly accused him of holding that the United States should seek mastery of the seas.

Treaties and Thermometers

MORE important possibly, and certain to be heard from again, is the proposal advanced by Senator David I. Walsh of Massachusetts. Holding that money must not be emphasized unduly when there is question of national security, the Senator urged that the Treaty should be accompanied by a reservation stipulating that the $1,000,000,000 needed to bring the navy up to its permitted theoretical strength be authorized now. The London agreement, said the Senator, constitutes another victory over the militarists. They have been informed of the limits beyond which they cannot go, expend and build. But what of the pacifists? They would "reduce our navy through negligence or lulled belief in our security, without adequate protection to an inferiority that would make our position much worse

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than it was before the negotiation of this treaty." Accordingly a resolve to do what we are entitled to now in the way of vessels and guns would make the country safe for that democracy which does not seek war but believes in carrying something dependable in its holster. We believe this suggestion merits consideration, even though we cannot bring ourselves to feel that it should be appended to the present senatorial debate as a sine qua non. But there is little doubt that the United States would be better equipped to play a leading rôle in coming international disarmament conferences if it revealed itself as determined to reckon exactly with its rights and requirements.

HOSTILITY to Americans has been fairly evident in France during recent months, and it is only natural that a country which has faced so many trials and perils should occasionally discover that it has nerves. Besides which, Americans are not always amiable. The disapproval in question, however, is largely the result of a fairly systematic campaign by means of which the press hoped to transport across the Atlantic the idea that Frenchmen resented the financial treatment accorded them by Washington—war debts, tariff—since the war. Sometimes this propaganda went pretty far, alleging that the citizens of the United States are "barbarians," greedily engrossed with money, machines and pleasure. The result was a great deal of personal discourtesy, manifested particularly to tourists. Reports of their sad experiences, as brought home by many, seriously detracted from the magnitude of the annual French summer collection. This has now induced the government to broadcast complimentary remarks anent the "Yankees," and to stimulate the heart which caters to visitors. Meanwhile several distinguished literary men who know America have produced compliments of their own. Ambassador Claudel's address, summarizing the virtues of the United States, was almost the opposite extreme from recent denunciations. We noticed Bernard Faÿ's critique of Duhamel's book—a sharp rejoinder to an unwarranted portrait of Chicago in dusky charcoal. And there are enough other things to justify the suspicion that the tide has turned.

France Off Color

EVEN those of us who have been chagrined at the contrast between England's criminal statistics and our own will hardly welcome the disturbed and ominous report of London's commissioner of police for 1929. The "quick and sure justice" which has kept down murders throughout the island, the traditional security which enables the bobby to go about his duties armed only with a club, the steady decrease in law-breaking of all sorts which has led to the closing of many English prisons, have been at once a challenge and an assurance to the rest of the world. The figures just published—covering only London, it is true—show a sudden halt and reversal in this civilized state of things. Crimes, especially burglary, went up over 11 percent last year, the increase in actual number being 1,778. More, the proportion of unsolved crimes, including spectacular murders, was very high. A jail-break of unparalleled daring is also recorded, and the report finally stresses what it calls the "motorization" of crime—the adoption by criminals of automobiles and airplanes, along with up-to-date methods that suggest the devices of our own indigenous racketeers. This parallel will probably not be lost upon English critics, though it will do us a certain injustice. We are not responsible for the moral breakdown represented by the commissioner's figures: England's abnormal and ever-deepening economic gloom must bear the brunt for that. But if our press and our movies are making her criminal tyros into experts, they are doing civilization one of those costly and unnecessary damages that may never be effectively repaired.

London's Law-breakers

THE uproar over the seizing of the mace in the House of Commons is probably not as funny as it seems. A Labor member protested the silencing of another Labor member who attempted to challenge the government on India, by jerking the sacred symbol from its fastenings in the speaker's table. Immediately, we read, the House was paralyzed with horror. Mr. MacDonald is credited with standing "white and shaken," and the rebellious Laborite had actually reached the door with his booty (where he was taking it is not clear) before his colleagues recovered their wits sufficiently to stop him. His suspension was immediately and overwhelmingly voted, and in the editorial comment which straightway burst out all over London, indignation is the universal note. Aside from Cromwell, we are reminded, no parliamentarian has ever taken liberties with the mace; even the Irish never touched it. Perhaps, we suggest again, all this is not so much like a scene from The Mikado as we would like to think. Perhaps this sacramental attitude is normal. We have no such august hammer in our own history; but suppose the Liberty Bell or the original Declaration of Independence were nailed to Mr. Longworth's rostrum in perpetual token of our sovereignty. Who of us is so emancipated or so blasé not to feel outraged at the sacrilege if it were torn away in protest or contempt?

More Than a Bauble

SENATOR GEORGE W. NORRIS has escaped the menace of the mysterious candidate from Broken Bow. Perhaps the deep-dyed Republican who regards party regularity as a sacred thing, will regret the Senator's triumph in court which is almost certain to presage his triumph in the primaries. Surely there are many in administration circles who would prefer another Nebraska Republican Senator even if he be George W. Norris, a war veteran and grocery clerk. But for those who believe in an honest

Senator and Broken Bowman

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election, any effort to becloud an issue can only be regarded as unfair tactics. And, despite the humor of the Comedy of Errors aspect which threatened Nebraska, there was obviously a vicious attempt to deceive the people into believing they were voting for one man when actually they were voting for another. Senator Norris, a victim of the small-minded in the party to which he nominally belongs and which has not yet the courage to disavow him, could not have done otherwise than run as an independent candidate. His threat to do so—apparently a procedure which did not occur to his enemies—brought the plotters to their senses. It was quickly found possible to eliminate the Broken Bowman. Senator Norris is apparently more useful to the Republican party in Nebraska than is the Republican party to Senator Norris.

MATERIAL as warm as the season appears in our contemporary, the Homiletic and Pastoral Review, on the subject of priests in knickers on the golf course. A correspondent had urged that such a spectacle might leave a bad taste in the mouths of the public at large and quoted a "prominent layman" as saying, "It is awful to see the clergy lowering themselves thus far." By way of comment the editors suggest that "wearing clothes suitable to a given occasion" can hardly be improper, and that the priest has as much right to put on the green as any "ordinary business or professional man who feels the need of exercise." They add that what matters is the spirit of fidelity to duty and self-sacrifice, not the letter of convention. This discussion strikes us as really very curious, and the number of reflections it suggests is legion. One may be isolated as follows: when the intrepid Jesuit missionaries of yore came to the new world as servants to the Indian, they could hardly be expected to plow through underbrush in soutane and biretta. Today a gentlemanly, courteous priest on the golf course has a similar chance to exemplify and sometimes to expound the faith to which his life is dedicated. If he takes advantage of this opportunity, and incidentally keeps himself from going to seed under the pressure of a sedentary life, we are all in favor of his "lowering himself a few feet farther. Of course one should not expect to meet a Trappist at the eighteenth hole. But that not all priests are Trappists is a matter of elementary ecclesiastical information which is all too frequently ignored.

Priests and Golf

DISCUSSING the present state of humanistic research before a meeting of the Mediaeval Academy of America, Professor J. M. Manly contended that the humanities are like the sciences in that both must rest their conclusions upon a basis of accurate investigation. This idea has, as a matter of fact, been taken for granted during recent years, so that vast amounts of money have been expended on research into ancient civilizations. "Mediaevalists do not begrudge the orientalists and archaeologists their good fortune," Professor Manly said. "But we do deplore the failure of the intelligent public to recognize in equal measure the claims upon its interest of those great ages which lie so near and yet are still as deeply buried under prejudices and misconceptions bequeathed to us by the Reformation and the Renaissance as the ancient cities of the Nile and the Euphrates under the drifted sands of Egypt and Mesopotamia." Some reasons why this neglect exists are evident. But may not one venture to declare that, from the American Catholic point of view, prevalent unwillingness to aid mediaeval scholarship is quite like prevalent unwillingness to aid any kind of intellectual endeavor? Whatever work is done, even that accomplished by Catholic investigators, derives not a nickel of support from Catholic wealth. That is the sad truth, and it is no credit to anybody.

Mediaeval Research

TWO magazines remote from each other in general tone and editorial purpose, the Forum and the Catholic World, come to hand with articles on the modern woman that might have been planned as companion pieces. Their animating philosophies are not at all the same, but the facts they observe and interpret are so indisputable, and supplement each other so neatly, that they make in combination a pretty complete history of their subject. The Forum writer describes the mania for salaried employment that has seized upon the women of what she calls the "leisured and demi-leisured classes," women who would otherwise be free to cultivate "domesticity and its attendant graces." The job-holder from choice, she says, is not only an economic menace to the job-holder from necessity; she also confesses her emptiness of resource, her unfitness to sustain that "elegance and charm" which the sheltered amateur can, and should, contribute to civilization. The author of the paper in the Catholic World is concerned with the activities of another type of woman—activities which possess their own "grace," undoubtedly, though there is very little leisure about them. She outlines the domestic career of the typical middle-class, college-bred Catholic girl, who marries young and sacrifices a good salary and personal ambition to help her husband struggle into recognition and security, and to bear and rear her children.

Why Women Stay Home

THE value of the papers, taken together, is that one puts a question very important in our time, and the other gives the only possible answer. What will keep women at home What is their main business in a home? That accepting a small salary from choice is economic selfishness, that the world needs the "elegance and charm" that only the home woman can supply, are true, but they are wholly beside the point and what the point is, the Forum writer does not even begin to suspect in the whole course of her analysis. She never

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alludes to children. They no more enter her calculations than they do those of the women whose lives she is criticizing. Surely this is a record omission: surely it is astounding to the verge of the weird to be disturbed about the superstitious exaltation of the job at the expense of the home, and then to betray in the next breath that you have no real idea of what a home is. The writer in the World could tell her. A home is, primarily, a place where children are brought up.

## SUFFERING THE LITTLE ONES

SINCE the appearance of the Holy Father's encyclical letter dealing with the nature and problems of Catholic education, there has been an abundance of discussion concerning various aspects of training in religion and life as that has been formulated by the teaching Church. One of these aspects seems of particular importance. What can be done for the child who does not attend a parochial school and whose parents cannot be relied upon to give instruction in the fundamentals of doctrine and practice? Statistics indicate that 2,248,571 children now go to more than 7,000 parish schools. According to the most conservative population estimates, however, there are nearly 5,000,000 Catholic youngsters of school age in the United States. That means: parochial education does not influence one half of the group for which it has been instituted and is now maintained at heavy cost. Despite all that pastoral energy and the remarkable loyalty of the faithful are able to do, the Church faces an apologetic task of vast dimensions and incalculable importance.

Two priests have recently set down their reflections on the subjects. The Reverend Joseph J. Mereto, author of a thoughtful pamphlet concerned primarily with conditions in the Chicago and New York districts, stresses the obvious fact that absolutely no criticism of the parochial school is implied; the Reverend William A. Scullen, writing in the Ecclesiastical Review, offers an account of what was done in a Cleveland parish to remedy the situation. Having read both documents, we can only suggest that they will interest anybody to whom the future religious welfare of America is a matter of importance. It is impossible to deny that great numbers of children thus left uninstructed will sooner or later give up all connection with the Church. The result can only be multitudes of poorer citizens—people who have lost spiritual and moral treasure of priceless value to the nation.

Existing limitations are due for the most part to two forms of psychological blindness. The first is unawareness of the problem. Because the Catholic tends to become acutely conscious of the society to which he belongs, he not infrequently loses touch with forces or circumstances more or less on the periphery of the Church. Thousands of parents seldom attend divine service, and other thousands never make even so much as an annual confession. Priests and laymen think and worry a great deal about these, but seldom have time or inclination to hunt them out, strive to reawaken their religious consciousness and see to the education of their children. This neglect is very easy to understand. It probably cannot be overcome until individuals dedicated to the work take it up with all their ardor and energy. The second form of blindness is the fear lest giving religious instruction to children in the public school might induce more parents to "take a chance" and give their children the benefit of more windows, swimming pools and marble foyers than the parochial schools normally afford. But though this danger exists and would probably lead to a number of defections from the present order, it can easily be overestimated. The parish school has already lived through its most critical period. Better equipped and staffed today than ever before, it now appeals to parents in general not merely because it is recommended by the authority of the Church but also because it affords excellent training in an atmosphere of culture and spirituality frequently lacking in public institutions.

This dual indifference can be overcome in part by earnestly confronting first the appalling truth that many thousands of young souls will be lost to the Church unless action is taken, and second the success already met with by able leaders in many places. In Brooklyn, for instance, Monsignor Hickey has arranged for the instruction of at least 70,000 children, most of the catechetical work being done by Catholic teachers in the public schools. Father John M. Lyons, a Chicago Jesuit, has organized an Instruction League which has helped to teach more than 200,000 children in many dioceses. Father Scullen's account of what has been accomplished in Cleveland is inspiring. Nevertheless there is much truth in the following passage in Father Mereto's pamphlet: "Things would have been very different had there been a great national organization—one that had united all the present diocesan catechetical organizations, built them up in membership by its nation-wide appeal for members, and improved their respective methods by a generous interchange of profitable ideas, still allowing diocesan control and complete freedom to meet local conditions. Picture such an organization, enjoying papal approbation and indulgences, able to assure priests and laymen alike that its efforts in behalf of Catholic children in public schools were above reproach and answering to a foremost need of our time." Such an organization would, one thinks, offer a clue to future progress.

At best the repudiation of the public school child is short-sightedness; at its worst it is a criminal act. How would Saint Paul, who preached the Gospel even in the market-place, judge an era which refused to little ones that going unto the Lord which is enjoined in one of the most illustrious passages in the New Testament? But difficulties are another matter. It is not for us to suggest how they can or ought to be met. All we can do is to outline the problem and hope that it will be one of the major concerns of the next decade.

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# CONGRESS HOME FOLKS

By ADAM DAY

*Mr. Hoover's administration has now nearly reached the centre of the four-year term. Much was expected of it; more has been said on the score of disappointed hopes. But though the published critiques have far outnumbered the printed eulogies, what matters after all is the popular impression. In the following paper Adam Day, returned from a news-gathering trip through the country, summarizes manifestations of the nation's political temper. The article is to be read, of course, as news and decidedly not as political propaganda for one party at the expense of another.—The Editors.*

JUST as the prodigal son returned home after far-wandering, so is the South safely back in the fold of the Democratic party. There would be nothing politically portentous in this, midway in a presidential term, if republicanism had slipped only in those states which broke over the Democratic traces in 1928, but a close survey of other states whose normal electoral vote is Republican shows further slipping of the G.O.P., putting Democratic prospects for the next presidential election in a livelier state than at any time since the Sage of Princeton became the choice of the people for the highest office within their gift.

Outside the South, just one thing is responsible for this—the widespread business depression with its attendant unemployment. Before now men in high office have served as targets for popular resentment when the times have fallen off, and once again the thought of people everywhere is connecting the administration with this depression without benefit of specific reasons.

It is admitted that the business set-back might well have obtained had Alfred E. Smith been sent to Washington. But Mr. Smith was not elected, and, jinx-fending republicanism notwithstanding, the depression is being felt in nearly every state. It little behooves to repeat that Republican cockiness invited this reaction when it held up Mr. Hoover to the country as the sure guarantor of continued and ever-mounting prosperity, or that Mr. Hoover forwarded this appraisal as a necromancer during his campaign. But, when the administration was not able to conjure up prosperity despite augmenting totals of telephones, radio sets and automobiles, which were characterized as prosperity factors in that unprecedented marshaling of Republican forces in 1928, quite naturally the popular imagination considered itself affronted. Then there was the tendency of the administration to encourage the belief that recovery lay in the passage of the tariff bill and its governmental commissions on law enforcement and farm relief had the misfortune to do poorly.

The fact that an unprecedented lot was expected of Mr. Hoover—that he would bring relief to the farmer, never before relieved; would enforce prohibition, promote international peace and preserve prosperity unabated, which millions never had in any case—weighs nothing now, any more than does the fact that Mr. Hoover was the inheritor of an intolerable political condition by which the party of which he is the head is being bifurcated. The thought is growing that a change would be good; that it would be right and proper to give the Democrats another try. It is a situation that the Republican leadership is going to have to meet if it decides to send Mr. Hoover back for reëlection. Meanwhile, like Wilkins Micawber, this leadership is hopeful that something will turn up.

It is true, of course, that Mr. Hoover's first year is not the only one in presidential annals to be marred by a national business depression. Mr. Wilson's ended in a temporary business slump; Mr. Harding's had the discouragement of the postwar depression; Mr. Coolidge's was stained with the oil and Department of Justice scandals. But with Mr. Hoover, it is not only the depression, it is the Senate gone berserk under a leader whose rationalism was not the broadsword he needed to deal with his party in Congress, a sieve-like law enforcement, unpopular appointments, the highest tariff in history and a stock market which turns bearish every time a phrase of reassurance issues from the high places in Washington.

I have just returned from a swing through the South and the West, and the political kaleidoscope was anything but cheering from the Republican standpoint. From the wheat fields of the Middle-West to the cotton fields of the South, the farmers are complaining and, in turn, merchants and all kinds of business are dissatisfied with the status quo and vociferously antagonistic over the Hawley-Smoot tariff bill. Even Louisiana dislikes the bill, despite the sugar schedule.

In the West the political unrest hinges wholly on economic conditions. No one there is satisfied with the tariff, and, coming as it did with low commodity prices, it is proving a hardship for the farmers, who are talking strongly of retaliation. Everywhere they are vocal about dollar wheat and what is left to the farmer when freight and commission charges are deducted, and of twelve-cent cotton, which, they declare, is worse than six-cent cotton in the nineties. They complain against the Farm Board, Congress and the administration—and the spirit of revolt which they are provoking in the Republican ranks is making the signs propitious for the Progressives, so-called.

As an American who had been long in the East and in foreign lands, I was prepared for changes in the West and Southwest, and especially in the South, but these differences were not so great as I had expected.

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With the new industrialization south of the Mason-Dixon line and the advent of northern capital, I had looked for an almost equal inflow of northern labor and northern and eastern standards of living, all of which would make for a cleavage of party lines and the upbuilding of a two-party system. I found nothing of the kind. In the South, political traditions are as strong as they ever were since the close of the reconstruction period. If anything, the South is taking more than ordinary thought of what it means to be a Democrat. Practically the only vestiges of the old order that have passed away are the split-rail fences and the razor-back hogs.

Many factories have been built, it is true, but not a few of these are on part-time schedule, and labor conditions are hard. This labor is wholly native, and the shacks which shelter it are clearly indicative of the poor scale of living. Education is making slow progress and is largely elementary. While the situation of the so-called "poor whites" is vastly better than it was even a quarter of a century ago, much is still to be gained, and education offers the chief channel. This aspect of the situation seems to be getting minor attention from officials and leaders in the mill towns and rural districts. The factory sites are all cleared, ready for the builder; the schools for the Negroes and the mill-workers are tumble-down buildings. All through Virginia, the Carolinas, Georgia, Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi and Texas great signs along the railroad blazon the advantages of the towns—their oversupply of cheap skilled and unskilled labor—to manufacturers and textile mill operators.

It was as if these chambers of commerce cried with tongues of brass: "Come, Capital, into this virgin field. Here are factory sites for the taking, water power and electric energy for a song of your own singing; men of strong body and women who will be mothers tomorrow and little children to work your spindles."

It is apparent that, through all the decades since Appomattox, the South has been unable to change the old system that had its development when these states were colonies. While the old glamor is gone, along with the slave-holding oligarchy, and a new industrial order has come, the class division is unchanged, save that the "new aristocracy" is immigrant from the West and the East. It is founded on the dollar.

And in the Southwest the wide open spaces and the trails that lead from ranch to ranch and from town to town have given place to roads that are lanes of barbed wire, and, especially between the Sabine and San Antonio rivers, farming has supplanted wholesale cattle-raising. Instead of a lone horseman on an old-fashioned trail, low-priced automobiles clutter roads dominated by billboard advertising of canned foods and cigarettes. The old hitching-post and water-trough are gone from the court-house square, but the coatless loungers, their cane-seated chairs atilt and their toothpicks busy, are the replicas of their fathers. Back in the interior, far from the railroad line, the cattle still graze, the rattlesnake and the cactus thrive, and the men-folks, contrite of heart for having once strayed from the narrow path in behalf of Mr. Hoover, vote the Democratic ticket.

Big crops of cheap corn and cheap cotton and millions in oil have not changed the current of life for these Nestors of the great Southwest. If it has lost the color of the old days with the advent of the flivver —old days when Roy Bean was law west of the Pecos —it still preserves the glorious traditions of the Mavericks and the Wests, the Driscolls and the Chisholms, and that long line of cattle barons whose herds grazed on a thousand hills. And its inhabitants think —and especially of Mexican labor—much as their ancestors thought.

This is about the only fly in the Texas labor ointment—cheap Mexican labor, along with the tariff and the low price of cotton and corn. For today Texas is one of the richest and perhaps the most prosperous states in the Union. Oil has made her what she is. New wells are coming in every day, and the five major oil companies are spending between $300,000,000 and $500,000,000 a year in development work. Geologists are combing the state from the Louisiana line straight through to El Paso, searching for petroleum, and big wells have been brought in as far west as Marfa—an arid region hitherto devoted exclusively to cattle and sheep. Cities and towns are booming, with Houston the centre of activity.

But with all this prosperity, Texas says with one voice that it is for a change in the White House, and even Republican leaders admit privately that by all indications the Lone Star State will "redeem" itself in the eyes of the Democracy in 1932 by piling up a vote for the Democratic candidate that will be doubt-dispeling as to traditional party alignment.

Agricultural conditions in Louisiana are similar to those in Texas. Crops are good, but prices of all farm products are at the low mark, and there is widespread unemployment. Added to this is wide division of sentiment within the state democracy over Governor Huey Long. This breach has rent asunder all the old-time ties of decorum between the legislative and the executive branches of the state government and reminds of carpet-bag days, save that now, those in opposition to the executive are less choice of their words than were the same elements over General Butler, General Sherman and the governors whom President Johnson sent to rule them. This opposition—and it is made up of the old aristocracy, the business and the wealth—wants a change in Baton Rouge, but it will get together with its opponents just the same on national issues after its Democratic fashion.

In so far as national policies are concerned, the same situation applies throughout the whole of the deep South, and the determination to leave buried the Republican pluralities of 1928 is very great. Neither Mr. Hoover nor any Republican candidate will break

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the solid South in 1932, for reasons that are patent and threefold: First, because of political traditions which are immeasureably stronger now than they were in 1928; because, secondly, the party whip has been wielded so effectively over recalcitrant Democrats who bolted the party two years ago and voted for Mr. Hoover; and, thirdly, because nothing has occurred during the Hoover administration that would justify these bolters for their defection.

Sentiment in the border states takes on the complexion of both the South and the Middle-West. Neither Tennessee, Kentucky nor Maryland are experiencing the prosperity that was stressed in the 1928 campaign as synonymous with a Republican administration, but the very reverse. In the middle of June, corn was four to six inches high along the line of the Southern Railroad in Virginia and the Carolinas, as against six feet along the Southern Pacific between Houston and Seguin. The consensus in these border states was that, if election came tomorrow, the electoral votes would go to the Democratic candidate.

One striking difference between the East, the Middle-West, the South and the Southwest lies in prohibition as a political issue. It was admitted everywhere that there was much bootlegging, but the wet-dry issue is not in headlines in the cities south and west of Washington. Best-informed observers declared it was not a political issue in these sections and that, aside from the "vociferousness of a few wets," these states are dry. Time, it was admitted, would probably bring some modification of the prohibition laws, but "the Eighteenth Amendment is here to stay."

A typical and outstanding characteristic of these sections was the provincialism of the press. Subjects of national import are printed in the news columns briefly at most, while from the editorial pages the old brilliance of the Prentisses and Wattersons is vanished indeed. There is a total lack of presentation of foreign news, save the stereotyped accounts sent out over the news circuits and these, when used, are almost always cut to the bone.

Newspapers like the Times-Picayune, of New Orleans, and the Chattanooga Times, with their own correspondents in Washington and New York, use press agency reports of national happenings in preference to interpretative accounts by their own writers. Indeed, every line of news in the press of the more important cities indicates unmistakably the subservience of the editorial department to the business office, and the desire of the business office for advertising and the policy to print just enough news to carry the advertising. The implication is grave, for these people are in a fair way to lapse again into their lethargic isolation prior to America's entrance into the world war. They are uninformed of the debates in Congress and of the questions before the national administration, save as these relate specifically to their locality, and then the presentation is either in the stereotyped form of a press agency dispatch or of a color to suit the individual policy or the politics of the newspaper owner. Floods and disasters at home, sensational divorce actions, murders and thefts constitute the daily news potpourri. If it is a "love triangle" in which a motion-picture actress is concerned, it is sure to get first-page prominence, as was the case in Texas early in June. Scant space or none at all was given by the same newspapers to the coincidental primary campaign in New Jersey in which Dwight W. Morrow, Franklin W. Fort and Joseph S. Frelinghuysen contested the Republican senatorial nomination.

It is not going too far to say that the provincial press is in large measure responsible for a political situation which, short of miracle, will make the election of a Republican President in 1932 extremely problematical. Its policy explains in great part why the Congress is what it is, and why men whose chief stock-in-trade is bigotry and intolerance and narrow-minded sectionalism can be elected to the legislative branch in Washington, and why, once elected, they can put through legislation or block measures, the ratification of treaties and the naming of supreme court justices or ambassadors after the thoroughly irresponsible fashion of nagging partisans. It facilitates the work of the demagogue by precluding the possibility of the mass of the readers of the daily or weekly press forming intelligent judgment on national issues, and holds the national political picture to the class of cheap, highly colored lithographs. Through its sins of omission, credence is lent to the old wives' tales which guide the political conclusions of the outlying electorate. One of these is the story about any political party having anything to do with either bad times or good, and of which the present villain is the hapless Republican administration.

## *Judas*

"Where are you going, Judas,
With that rope in your hand?"
"To scatter what God will not forgive
To the dark wind and the sand."

"Why is your purse empty, Judas,
Dangling light and loose?"
"Silver I had; but all earth's gold
Could not ransom Him from the Jews."

"Could you not cry for mercy, Judas?
His kindness has no scope."
"The kindest things that I shall find
Are a tall tree and a rope."

"Oh fool! fool! Even this sin, Judas,
He will pardon from His cross."
"The death that saves all other men
Is my eternal loss."

"Wait, and you shall see Him risen, Judas."
"His eyes would be to me a rod—
For I have betrayed an innocent man."
"Nay, Judas, only God."

THEODORE MAYNARD.

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# VISION OF ETERNAL JOY

By H. A. JULES-BOIS

PIUS XI, uniting in his person the authority of the papal office and high competence as an historian, has invited the world to reconsider St. Augustine on the occasion of the fifteenth centenary of his death. It is, of course, no mere coincidence that the Eucharistic Congress met this year at Carthage, where the son of Monica studied and taught, and near which lay Hippo, his episcopal see. I still remember with what emotion I heard Mass, years ago, at Bône, the new city almost on the site of Hippo, in the church possessing the relic of the saint's arm—the arm which wrote so much for the betterment of mankind.

Each new encyclical of the Holy Father is an answer to some spiritual need of the epoch and this last is no exception. Never was the time more opportune for recapitulating the fundamental principles underlying the Christian faith. These Augustine had indicated with the courage of the lion and the gentleness of the lamb. His work still abides, winning over the heart of the sinner and even making an impression on the obdurate. His age and ours have in common an almost universal unsettlement. The same errors attempt to profit in their assault by a similar restlessness. Masked by other names, the heresies Augustine combated again lift up their perfidious heads. Naturalism is at the gate, if not in the heart of, the city; paganism struggles to reappear; machinery tends to render our life more and more materialistic. Since the close of the war ignorance seems to prevail; youth openly repudiates ideals; subservience to brutish instincts appears to have become the fashion; ethical abnormalities are far from being abhorred; a "new morality," which is equivalent to organized demoralization, is widely preached by men and women sophists; repression is held to be a mistake, causing degenerative illness; virtue is without much positive meaning for a supposedly scientific era. On the other hand many have substituted prejudice and hypocrisy for stalwart faith. At the Ninth International Congress of Psychology, recently held in an important American university, a professor declared that behaviorism and Freudianism are the two principal forms of modern psychology, and he was almost unanimously approved. The actual development of psychology is consistently toward a naturalistic view of human behavior; modern psychology is naturalistic. It is no wonder that the Orient, from which Manes and Manicheanism issued, now sends us apostles of wild superstitions which are but species of agnosticism hiding under the cloak of inexact science and mendacious thaumaturgy. There is no need to exaggerate the peril. It is great enough.

Our pastors are vigilant. They stimulate our mental apathy and guide us to the light. Good will is not lacking in contemporary life, but men live too much according to their senses and in the external world. In his great recent encyclical, Ad Salutem, the Holy Father observes that instead of employing the discoveries of modern science to enlarge the reign of Christ and promote our own spiritual advancement we are building up an epicurean civilization in a spirit of indifference to our final destiny and even to our true happiness on earth. The "interior man" has almost disappeared; and still, as Augustine said in his book, On the Trinity: "Why do we go forth and run to the heights of heaven and to the lowest parts of the earth seeking Him who is within, if we wish to be with Him?" The saintly Bishop of Hippo was a demonstration of his own doctrine anent grace coöperating with free will. What a difference between the eloquent Manichean rhetorician still enslaved to his senses, and the heroic doctor of the Church he later became, thanks to virtue and grace! When the film fell from his spiritual eye, his genius took on the splendor of inspiration and truth. He had grown by the divine gift superadded to his personality. Prior to his conversion, Augustine's superconscious self, as we say today, poured out upon the world troubled though sparkling waters; but after moral purgation, a divine tide ran through the purified channel. A new man appeared in whom God really abided—magister intus est—and Augustine, now despising a fame he had so greedily sought, nevertheless obtained it to such a degree that he is eminent even now in the opinion of men. The great bishop, Bossuet, alluding to the two verities of grace and free will which sometimes appear to us difficult to coördinate, declared, "I firmly hold the two ends of the chain." And the chain itself is visible in the glorious transformation of Augustine, the "saint of so many tears."

Through him the highest human wisdom speaks, purified and illuminated by the Holy Spirit. In the same manner as Aristotle is constantly quoted in the Summa of Aquinas, Plato appears in the philosophical treatises written by the author of The Confessions. But here both Aristotle and Plato are teachers who have found their masters. Thus the colloquy on Eternal Blessedness had been anticipated by Plato's Symposium. Let us compare them.

In the Symposium, Plato attributed a poetical outline of spiritual advancement to a mysterious foreign woman, Diotima, a Mantinean, he said, but perhaps a Druidess wandering from a Borean country under the Hellenic sun. According to her consistent doctrine, she begins by advancing "the absolute inadequacy of the satisfaction of our most profound desire," regarding the objects offered us by the senses. Such is the first degree of the initiation. From visible things, she says, we have to rise to the invisible; then:

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> How greatly must creative souls desire that partnership and close communion with other souls as fair, as they may bring to birth a brood of lofty thoughts, poems, statues, institutions, laws—the fitting progeny of the soul!

Even the fair form has given precedence to the noble mind, till the student is stimulated to recognize that the beauty inherent in all souls is akin. Consequently, he detaches himself from a personal choice, to cherish everywhere the Beauty transcendent and unique. Now we set sail with Plato on the ocean of sciences, and if we wax strong and become experienced mariners, we discover that the ocean is one, though the waves are many. So we draw near the end, and behold a Being marvelously fair, for whose sake all previous labors have been undergone, almost unaware: One whose pulchritude can never be born nor perish, nor imagined after the fashion of all witcheries of corporeities and knowledges, since He dwells in naught but in Himself. The Mantinean suggests to Socrates:

> Could man's life be poor and low in that *vision* and *beatitude?* Or deemst thou not that alone it will be possible for this man, discerning spiritual beauty, to beget no shadows of virtue, since that is not shadow to which he clings, but virtue in very truth, since he has the very truth in his embrace? And begetting and rearing virtue as his child, he must needs become the friend of God; and if there be any man who is immortal, that man is he.

It is worth noting that the expression "Beatific Vision" is potentially included in the words, "in that *vision* and *beatitude.*" Station by station, the pilgrimage through the "within" has been accomplished. From physical beauty to the splendor of ideas, from ideas to the ideal, up to Being itself, which is the Good. Diotima has detected that beauty and truth are made only to drive our intellect and heart to Goodness, and so she may solemnly ascertain the primacy of ethics and the imperative obligation of virtue.

Though a heathen, Plato lays as the foundation of his philosophy the elimination of the libido, product of original sin, not yet named in his time but well realized. Now in an era of Christianity, thinkers pretending to be progressive, but nevertheless retrogressive, are trying to promote the libido, as the fountain of a chaotic life, which shall not have as an excuse ignorance of the glad and pure tidings from Nazareth. Freud, Jung, Watson and their disciples deify our passions through a decree of false science. On the contrary, Plato, at the incipiency of the journey through the beyond within and above us, advises us to liberate our being from the "evil wish," ugly addition to our personality, which we must reject if we want to be sound. This malefic present from our perverted nature, Plato advises us to drop into the hands of our senses (so to say) and when we have done this he bids us then break away from the senses themselves, meaning that we may use them, but should not live in them.

In Book IX, Chapter 10, of Augustine's Confessions, we are not sitting at a banquet, among emulating orators, aroused by the applause of the convives; we see only a mother and a son, Monica and Augustine, in a little Italian town. What they drink is only their tears. Monica's sobs have been heard by God; they have begotten Augustine a second time, to the life eternal. The twice-born son, a man of thirty-three, has gone through hard trials of passions and heresies to reach the truth. Strange it is that in the Platonic fiction, as well as in Christian experience, woman plays a most important rôle: Diotima and Monica. The foreign seeress, as daring as a suffragette; and the silent, humble, inconspicuous wife of Patricius. Of the other, of Diotima, we do not know the deeds and the whereabouts; she thunders from a cold, clear intellectual sky. But we know, even in her venial faults, the pious and sober existence of the motherly saint. Usually silent, when she speaks it is not before an audience and her main eloquence resides in her hidden virtues. She does not impose on her son the precepts of a proud wisdom, as Diotima did on Socrates, but only admonishes him to lead a pure and Christian life. And yet, more than Ambrose and Athanasius, more than Plato, she renewed the mind of the one who was, thanks to her tears, to become a doctor and saint.

Monica and Augustine are together before a casement, which offers to their view a garden of flowers and fruits and wafts to them perfumed breath from the aged Italian soil. That virtue, but speculative and verbal, in which Diotima's discourse culminates, Monica especially had long practised, and both she and her son know repentance and atonement, facts natural and supernatural unknown by the Greeks. Thus they begin their spiritual uprising from the elevation attained by Platonic wisdom, but with past experience and with new wings.

No strain, a dignified simplicity. After "conversing alone very pleasantly," they inquired between themselves "of what nature the eternal life of the saints would be, which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard." From the first moment they had "opened wide the mouth of their hearts," to drink at "the fountain of life." Being now refreshed by its waters, they can travel higher. How human and divine they are! Augustine at first declares that the purest and the brightest satisfaction of the senses appears—by reason of the diaphaneity and sweetness in the life of the saints—worthy not even of mention. Mother's and son's spiritual argosy pierces the cloud of corporeal things, soars above the sky, above the sun, moon, stars, and arrives at their own minds, hovering beyond them, up to the feet of that Wisdom, by whom all those things are made, but who is not made—He always was and shall ever be. Slightly touching the hem of His robe, they sigh and leave bound, as too precious a harvest, "the first-fruits of the Spirit," and "return to the noise of their own mouth" where the word uttered has both beginning and end.

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After a pause they attempt a new ascension, meditating not upon the power of silence, but the way opened to the Divine Word, by universal silence—silence of the flesh, of the earth, of thought itself; silence in which creatures confess: "We have not been our creator, but have been created by Him who abides forever." Then the fluttering of this silence itself being hushed, both Monica and Augustine hear "the still and small voice," starting from the Infinite and alone able to satiate the inexhaustible aspiration of the soul, the soliloquy without tongue, the sound without resounding, but the Word essential, the Word of words. . . . The eternal Wisdom speaks to His favorite children without the instrumentality of human or angelic language, without the obscurity of similitude; and this Voice is life in superabundance, limitless knowledge, bliss. Then, anew, they sigh, because all this has been but for a moment And, eager to regain it, they cry, "Was not this, 'enter thou into the joy of the Lord?' "

William James would have called this a supreme "religious experience." However it may be, "the Kingdom of God is within." Saints are saints because they realize it. To them this is no longer a thing of words but a fact experienced. And since we have evoked the testimony of by far the best scientist of recent years, let him have here the final word and express our reverence for the saints. "Their sense of mystery in things," said James, "their passion, their goodness irradiate about them and enlarge their outlines while they soften them. They are like pictures with an atmosphere and background; and placed alongside of them the strong man of this world and no other seems as dry sticks as hard and crude as blocks of stone and brickbats." The reason why this is so begins to be perceived dimly by those who have studied the superconscious with the "sense divine," to use Gratry's phrase, the superconscious in us which is the human channel of eternal grace.

# HEROES AND MARTYRS

By HILAIRE BELLOC

WORDS have a way of branching out like trees, so that a particular word which meant one thing comes to mean a dozen others: first, slightly different, then so different as to have no connection in the mind between one use of it and the other. For instance, the word chivalry, the word "cavalier," the word "cavalry," all have the same origin, and they mean three quite different things; so do the words "policy," "police" and "polite"—each of which three originally meant "belonging to a city."

Now so it is with the word "hero," for it has come to mean three things. First an outstanding, rather theatrical applauded thing, a figure acclaimed as a representative of his nation or times, a leader, a doer of great deeds. Next it has come to mean the subject of a romance. And all the time it has also meant a person who suffered out of all measure (and successfully!) for a point of honor or of morals.

It is remarkable that while the word "hero" has branched out like this, the word "heroism" has not suffered the same misfortune. It has remained single. It means one thing. It means the capacity of acting in the last sense: enduring great agony in defense of a point of honor or morals, and coming out triumphant. Herein it is closely attached to that other word "martyr."

The word "martyr" originally meant no more than a witness. Then it came to mean someone who had suffered and died, or even only died, for the Faith. Lately even that word has become a little degraded, and is used in two wrong senses. People talk of an old gentleman as being "a martyr to insomnia" which he has brought upon himself by debauch, or they talk of a person who gets cancer from fiddling about with chemicals as "a martyr to science." Now the true meaning of "a martyr to insomnia" would be a man who so adored sleeplessness as the end of man that he was willing to suffer anything rather than to go to sleep. While a martyr to science ought to mean a man who successfully suffered the utmost tortures rather than admit that a proved scientific truth (such as the inferior oxydisability of gold to copper) was false. Both these kinds of martyrs are rare.

But to go back to heroism. Heroism is a standing proof that we are the children of God. Those who practise heroism, even in a mistaken cause, are indeed the champions of our fallen race. I have been moved by them all my life, just as much when I knew them to be working on false premises as when I knew them to be working upon true. For the quality of heroism does not depend upon the opportunities of the hero—by instruction, experience or intelligence—of distinguishing the just cause. It depends upon his ability to triumph. If he can just pass the line of extreme endurance, he is like the victor in a race breasting the tape. But he is much more; he confirms his fellowmen.

It is part, I believe, of the Irony of God (I use the phrase reverently—I mean, rather, the contrast between the majesty of God's purpose and our own insignificance) that heroism passes unknown. The hero in the popular sense is popularly acclaimed. Some vulgar politician or other, ignorant of foreign languages, blunders unwittingly into insulting a foreign government, and becomes for five minutes a popular hero—as though he had won a battle. Another man exercising some small talent in sport is similarly acclaimed. But those who go down into the depths and suffer the extreme of ill for conscience's sake, most of them, are never heard of. But there is One who knows.

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I will give three examples. I choose them deliberately from cases only one of which accords with the rightfulness of the issue, while the other two were wrongheaded. I choose them because all three show very finely that power in man of setting an example in unflinching will to his fellowmen.

The first I take is that of a certain tailor, who came from Evesham about five hundred years ago and a little more. It was at the end of that lifetime after the Black Death, in the end of the Great Schism in the Papacy, in the time when men were at sixes and sevens about religion, and the bad turmoil which led to the explosion of the Reformation had already started, and the Church was corrupt; when, in general, evil was abroad. This poor tailor could not see how the Blessed Sacrament could be what the Faith affirmed it to be. Probably he was never sufficiently instructed in such a diseased time. All civilization was sick, and he had caught a special disease. He had heard the mutterings and protests against the insufficiency and avarice of the clergy. It was the clergy who consecrated the Host—he denied their power. He was condemned to be burned (after being brought up to London). They bound him to the stake in Smithfield Market Place. The young Prince of Wales, who was later to be Henry V, the victor of Agincourt, was present. Seeing the man's sufferings, he ordered him to be unloosened when the fire had already begun to do its work. He asked whether the victim would recant. He recanted. Then, recovering his will, this obscure fellow from the populace said, "No! I will go back into the fire." They put him back to the agony and he was consumed. That was heroism.

Here is another example, also in a wrong cause, yet equally sincere and equally an example for every man, of tenacity. Thomas Wentworth, Lord Strafford, had been condemned to death for supporting the English monarchy against a group of rich men who were in rebellion against it. He was forty-eight years of age. He had taken his sentence nobly, and had said to those in the House of Lords, his fellow-peers who had the baseness to condemn him: "Te Deum laudamus. In te Domine confido, non confundar in aeternum." The very day before he was to die his detestable brother-in-law, who was partner to his death, sent to promise him life if he would abandon episcopacy in the Anglican Church and advise King Charles, over whom he had such great power, to assent to the abolition of bishops of that establishment. The question makes us smile today. But three hundred years ago it was very real. Wentworth preferred to die, and next day he died.

My last example shall be from fiction. And it concerns no wrongheaded ideal, but a right one. I take it from fiction because, of a myriad real examples of heroism in defense of the Faith, it is the one which for the moment comes home to me most poignantly. It is in a book by Monsignor Robert Hugh Benson, and deals with the conversion of a humble curate married to a vixenish wife, dependent for his livelihood and hers upon a small stipend, earnestly and humbly adhering to the communion of his baptism, the Anglican. The book portrays this man passing through the internal doubt, discussion and decision of the convert. He loses his place; he sinks into small, precarious, sordid lodgings; his wife persecutes him; he is brought up against despair. He seeks in that despair some kind of employment. The end of the story shows him failing to find it, utterly alone within and without, unsupported, but undeterred.

I am not sure that this sort is not the greatest heroism of all: that which has behind it the adamantine phrase, "Quia tu es Deus meus."

## FRATERNITY

By MILDRED PLEW MERRYMAN

HE IS assistant cashier in a bank uptown; last fall he became my next-door neighbor. Now we are good friends. Once or twice in a fortnight, he forsakes the company of his two maiden sisters and his old mother, to tap softly at my door. He is, I think, the gentlest little man I have ever known. Years of unselfish living have left him a trifle worn at the edges, but his spirit is undimmed.

Our evenings together have a ceremonious air. He never drops in for a chat; he comes to call. While I take his hat, his overcoat, his stick or his umbrella, we speak formally of the weather, our states of health.

"You — you are positive I do not disturb you?" he queries anxiously. I assure him I am delighted.

As we seat ourselves in the living-room, I ask about his sisters and his mother; he inquires politely concerning my relatives. He has his special armchair near the fireplace, and I mine. His is beneath the lamp.

The pocket of his coat looks fat and bulgy; a white envelope peeps out. We suceed in ignoring it for half an hour.

He is fidgety at first and sits erectly, crossing and recrossing his feet, or lifting a hand to run thin nervous fingers through his downy hair. But the sputter of the fire is restful and the lamplight mellowing. Gradually he relaxes, feels at home. The moment has arrived. I am no longer stupid about that moment. I know it, even as it ticks. I inquire:

"You have brought a sketch or a story to read me?"

He blushes and fumbles in his pocket.

"It is of no consequence really," he protests; "but I thought perhaps you might like it—it is merely a little thing of my own. All of a sudden, in the middle of the night last night, it came over me in a sort of rush; I got out of bed to write it."

The manuscript crackles as he opens it; he shifts toward the lamp and adjusts his glasses. His voice, which is ordinarily bland and diffident, takes on a full rich tone. He hems and plunges in.

"It was night in the city of Paris. Arc lights and the white eyes of automobiles played eerily through the shadows. On the corner of a street in Montmartre waited the still figure of a woman, scarcely more than a girl.

"Out of the murk a tall handsome man approached to stare at the beautiful brown eyes of the maiden in whose depths lurked tragedy."

His voice rolls on. Our flesh creeps agreeably as we descend along devious paths. Occasionally, after some bit of particularly luscious alliteration, he pauses to glance shyly at me over

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his glasses and make sure I have not failed him. At my nod he resumes.

The trials of the heroine grow lurid. With half my mind I follow her faithfully through peril after peril, while the other half withdraws to consider the occasion of our first meeting—my neighbor's and mine.

Lingering among my dahlias late one autumn afternoon, I was surprised to hear a flurry of sound and to see his blond head come bobbing above the top of the fence. Thick glasses made a vagueness of his eyes.

"I — I beg your pardon," he stammered; "but I have been told you — you are a — a writer."

"I hope to be some day," I said.

He was short and the fence was tall. In his eagerness, he appeared to rise to his tiptoes.

"I—I am also of the fraternity," he said; "I, too write!"

I approached the fence and, somewhat after the manner of conspirators indulging in a high sign, we shook hands.

"Tell me," he said, a little hoarsely, "do you — *publish?*"

"I do when I'm lucky," I replied.

"Ah!" he breathed.

For a moment he was so impressed he could not speak. He blinked and again his enthusiasm bubbled.

"Tell me," he said, "do your — your best inspirations come over you late at night in a sort of — of flash?"

Standing there winking at me through his glasses, he waited hopefully for my answer. I hesitated. Could I tell him the truth—tell him that nothing ever came over me at night but slumber and never yet in my experience had I been visited by a flash? Obviously, I could not.

I regarded him and nodded. "Exactly like that!" I said.

One evening a week or so later, with a manuscript in his pocket, he came to call. Upon my inquiry he flushed.

"It is of no consequence really," he protested; "it is merely a little thing of my own — but being a writer yourself I thought you might care to hear it and to — to advise me."

Thus began the occasions which have made us friends.

Each evening after the brown-eyed maid's adventures have drawn to a satisfactory close, we sit quietly for awhile, considering where to send her. Experience has made me wise.

"Haven't you any particular market in mind?" I asked him.

He ponders. "What would you think of Harper's?"

"Splendid," I replied. "I'd try it by all means!"

Once long ago in my ignorance, I was moved to suggest a humbler port and was met by a hurt silence. We decide definitely upon Harper's.

"If only," he sighs, "one could be certain that one's story would reach the editor himself. One has so little chance with the underlings; they are so often insensitive, careless, prejudiced."

"What about the sketch you read me last time?" I inquire. "Have you had any luck with that?"

He looks ashamed and unhappy. "It — it came back," he replies, "with a slip."

"And where is it now?"

"In — in my desk."

He smiles guiltily. This is an old subject of controversy between us. My manner is accusing.

"I know," he explains, "but I feel so — so crushed when they come back — I really haven't the heart to try again. After all, you see, they are my — my brain children and living in a commercial age, what can one expect?"

Very little, we decide. The rest of the evening we have a lovely time berating the public, the critics, the editors, everyone but ourselves. When we have damned them all, my maid brings in hot chocolate and homemade cookies. Contentedly we sip and scrunch and sip. In reality we hate no one, are jealous of few. It is merely that having discovered a game, we like to play it. When the clock strikes ten we are both astonished; the time has slipped away so agreeably.

"Well," he murmurs, "ten o'clock, the idea! I must be going at once!"

We rise and enter the hall, where he dons his coat and carefully draws on his gloves. Then we thank each other for a pleasant evening and he departs.

On my return to the fire the living-room feels empty and oddly quiet. Our cups and saucers look somehow a little pathetic, like a child's tea-party after the children have gone.

# INTIMATIONS OF IMMORTALITY

By PAUL BUSSARD

ON AN afternoon Pierrot and Columbine sat beneath a tree. About them the countryside lay claim and quiet beneath the beat of the sun. As they sat in the shade of the tree Columbine amused herself with restringing an ancient lute curious in contour. The light of the sun coming slowly through the leaves of the tree made little patches of purple on the grass about them and on the white hands of Columbine as they moved nervously about the instrument. Pierrot lay on his stomach with his chin resting on his hands, amusing himself and mystifying Columbine with quaint witticisms and learned historical observations on the origin of the lute, the remarkable uses people in sundry places had made of it; and on occasion he smiled at the nature of man able to amuse itself with such a simple toy.

It was Pierrot's custom to speak thus, and Columbine had long since given up an endeavor to understand him, although she hoped, by her judicious air and discreet silence to convey the impression of great wisdom. When Pierrot grew weary and fell to thinking without speech, Columbine would begin chattering in a charming voice of little these and thats which concerned no one in particular and to which Pierrot paid not the slightest attention.

As Pierrot lay with his elbows on the ground and his chin cupped in his hands he saw the figure of a man approaching them. From his peculiar position on the ground the man appeared to be a creature composed mainly of legs. Pierrot had the hallucination of seeing the giant with seven-league boots coming swinging over the hills. Of a sudden a meadow lark, startled by the stride of the booted man, flew up with a loud angry whir of wings. The walker did not so much as glance at the bird, nor did he glance at Pierrot or Columbine, nor offer a word of greeting as he sat down with his back to the tree.

As the three of them sat in the purple patches the only sound in the warm stillness was the occasional tinkle of the lute, Columbine listening judiciously.

"My friend," said the man, "this time of day I cannot tolerate. It is unbearable." And he smiled faintly as he said, "—even in this company."

"Very quiet," said Pierrot.

"Any time of night, any time of the day near the night is not impossible. One can think of things in the evening. There is the sun that usually sets. One can dream after it's gone. One can want to do things in the morning. There's the sun that rises. But look at it now, and feel the thickness of this

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silence. Afternoon, bah! Who wants to do anything afternoons? Dotards go to sleep. I should be asleep."

The man glared at Pierrot who was looking intently at the progress of a bug through the blades of grass, and then at Columbine who quickly bent her graceful head as she plucked a string.

"An emptiness—a feeling of futility," mused Pierrot. "Somehow one is a stranger in his own house. A restlessness and yet no desire to do anything definite. A distaste for one's self. An impatience with all things. An indeterminate desire. A longing for something unknown. A slight pain and yet no—"

"The feeling's so empty you can't say it in words. I wish you'd stop."

"I was just going to express it," said Pierrot as he helped the bug to the top of a blade of grass. As it swayed uncertainly there, Pierrot continued, "An inanity so inane one cannot speak of it will furnish but a meagre topic to talk about. However, it produces strange activities. Did you never notice that such a time you cannot bear to be alone with yourself? I daresay that explains why you sit where you are listening to Columbine playing out of tune. Even her immelody fills the emptiness of your mind—does it not?"

"Well, if it does. . . ."

"It needs filling." Pierrot smiled. "You see it is so big and when this time of day comes you become conscious of boredom, of that slight ache. Why should you not say you become conscious of how big your mind is—how much it wants fillment?"

"Eheu, it wants something. Early afternoons I've longed for something and I cannot find what it is. Nothing I have, nothing I can imagine having. One should sleep, I see, or become quickly drunken."

"Oh!" said Pierrot, and when the man turned from looking at the horizon he saw Pierrot's head in the grass.

"The happy creature fell from the top of the stem," he said smiling, and he went on paying his attention to the clambering bug as he spoke to the man with Columbine. "Once someone remembered he had been born, busied his mind with the implements of poetry, wrote something about immortality being intimated by his memories of birth, mentioned the clouds of glory that trailed after him from birth. His memory was of a child whose feet were heavy with glory. I will cure your restlessness if you will understand why you are restless. The tale is now of a man who has constantly been intimated of immortality by ennui of early afternoon, who frets because he is being led forth to face the something which recognized will render fretting a pastime passé. Our trouble lies not with the sun but with ourselves—that we are so insatiable. Whatever you think of, you can think of more. Want everything and you want more. Do you cram this world down your throat, your mouth still is open. I do entreat you stop not your mouth. Soon it shall be filled. But you should know really what you want."

"Well," said the man resignedly, "after the preachment, what does my enormity crave?"

The purple patches moved over Pierrot's left hand as he gestured slightly upward, "God."

"I think," remonstrated Columbine as she put the lute from her, "that you are becoming excessively surface-like, Pierrot."

She gazed at the man as he walked rapidly along the brook's path.

"At any rate you see him walking toward the source of the stream," said Pierrot, and at once he was casting about in his mind for an image that would adequately describe the little animal tottering at the top of the green stem.

# COMMUNICATIONS

## HOLLYWOOD

New York, N. Y.

TO the Editor:—It is a perilous proceeding to attempt to defend Hollywood, especially against the attack of such a loyal Californian and zealous Catholic as Margaret Richard. Not that I have any special brief to offer for Hollywood, nor am I moved to champion the cause of Vincent Sheean, whom I happen to know is very well able to wield a shilleleh in his own defense.

It is to find fault with Miss Richard's intemperate attitude in saying that the Editor of The Commonweal should have deprived his readers of the opportunity of reading Mr. Sheean's philosophic article that I am writing. Also to protest against the sideswipe she takes in passing, at Times Square, which is my professional habitat.

It is much easier to abuse a thing and so dispose of it than to analyze it and philosophize about it. Miss Richard has taken the easier way. But Hollywood as one of the most amazing manifestations of modern times warrants no such hasty sweep into the discard. Mr. Sheean's analytic study of the cinema city contained much food for thought, to which readers of The Commonweal were certainly entitled. Miss Richard intimates that because these readers are Catholics they should have been spared the knowledge all intelligent people are seeking—about Hollywood. In order to understand its psychological significance, such information as Mr. Sheean's article contained is essential.

Just saying, as she does, that Hollywood is a "cesspool where gentlemen with large fortunes contribute to the glorification of debauchées and divorcées" is too sweeping a statement to go unchallenged. And if this were true and nothing more, Hollywood would have no more significance as a psychological problem than any large city in the country. The Hollywood colony is made up of the richest, the least cultured and the hardest worked group of rich people in the world. But they are by no means the wickedest. Twenty-five years ago, Californians believed all the wicked people lived in New York City, and from there "poison flowed all over the continent" (the quotation is Miss Richard's). The national sink of iniquity was then in Manhattan. Mother Jones and Billy Sunday raved about it. But what they said about New York's rich smart set at that time was quite as irrational as the sweeping statements made by Miss Richard about Hollywood's colonists. If all the wicked people in the country would turn green over night, there might be any number of places in the United States where emerald-hued individuals would be as thick as in Hollywood. It is rather difficult to fix the geographical centre of wickedness.

Miss Richard ventures another inaccuracy. She says "bath tubs and bedroom scenes raise nonentities to publicity and fortune." As a matter of fact these nonentities acquire fame and fortune because the American public likes that kind of thing well enough to pay good money for it. Just making cigarettes does not make a manufacturer wealthy. Millions of people have to smoke them. No actress, however ravishing, would get rich or famous just sitting in a bath tub or careening around a bedroom, if hundreds of thousands of customers were not clamoring for the excitement of looking at her. There are thousands of wicked citizens to one wicked movie star on that count alone.

It is quite true as Miss Richard says that Ramon Navarro and Greta Garbo lead decent lives, but she is wrong in sup-

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posing that they are practically alone in their virtue. There are many others equally exemplary. But both Navarro and Garbo are tremendous box-office successes, not because they are well behaved but because they are fine actors and dripping with personality. In fact the public is requiring so much sex appeal from talkie stars now that they are too exhausted trying to live up to the insatiable demands of audiences to be as wicked as they are supposed to be.

Whether the American public is making Hollywood wicked or whether Hollywood is making the people wicked is an interesting question, and Mr. Sheean's accurate article furnished the readers of The Commonweal with valuable data as to their reaction on each other. Just denouncing the movie stars, and whitewashing everybody else—except Mr. Sheean, the Editor of The Commonweal, and the habitués of Times Square —will never solve the mystery of Hollywood.

MARIE L. DARRACH.

## WHAT NEW JERSEY MEANS

Paterson, N. J.

TO the Editor:—Interesting as Charles Willis Thompson is, I think he is almost totally wrong in his interpretation of the Morrow victory in New Jersey. Many other newspapermen made mistakes along the same line. It was natural for the papers bent on glorifying Morrow to say it was a Morrow victory. Much the same can be said of the anti-prohibition press which attributed the large vote given the Ambassador to Mexico to his bold stand on prohibition and his plea for states rights.

My own opinion is that had Mr. Thompson or plain Bill Jones been the candidate instead of Dwight Morrow, he would have gained a majority over both Frelinghuysen and Fort, had he got the same publicity from the papers circulating in New Jersey. The New York Sun, Times, World and the Daily News with a combined circulation of over half a million in New Jersey were out for Morrow. He also had the support of several of the leading papers in the state. The New York Sun made a special plea to the commuters to hurry home and vote. They did, for the first time in the history of special elections in this state, and they voted for Morrow. The Philadelphia Public Ledger did a similar service for the Ambassador in South Jersey.

The publicity that Morrow received through being the father-in-law of Colonel Lindbergh was not lost by any means. Mr. Morrow also had the support of two or three machines, the Baird of Camden and South Jersey, the Bergen County and the Paterson McCutcheon machines.

I hold that Morrow, outside of the few prohibition speeches he delivered after careful preparation, made a poor campaign. Local matters he was afraid to touch on. He avoided all mention of the League of Nations though he favors it. He announced Germany did not start the war. Well it took him a long time to find that out. If that is a sample of his capacity and courage then Mr. Morrow is greatly overrated.

As for the wet and dry issue, that is a joke, for the state is wide open and one can drink any brand, kind or quantity of hard, soft or intermediate liquor he may have a mind to.

With all the pomp and noise and boosting of Morrow and his alleged victory at the New Jersey primaries there really was no decision on a new principle. Bear in mind that one "Wet" named Morrow succeeded another "Wet" named Edge and both happen to be ambassadors and conservatives.

You are shouting too soon and for nothing.

PATRICK L. QUINLAN.

# THE SCREEN

By RICHARD DANA SKINNER

## *The Dawn Patrol*

THE flood of war stories let loose when the gates of What Price Glory were opened has not yet been checked. In most cases, the implied purpose of the stories is to show the horror and waste and futility of war. Yet I doubt quite seriously whether the professional jingoists have anything to worry about. Journey's End, whatever it might mean to the thoughtful person, exalted the spirit of quiet heroism. All Quiet on the Western Front was a bit sharper in its irony, more pitiless in its exposures, yet even this picture could not entirely obliterate heroism. Nor could it, from its very nature, nullify that sense of excitement which nurses the secret fascination of war. The Dawn Patrol, by the author of Wings, is still another contribution to the literature of dying bravely. Hero worship is coming back as fast as the war generation will permit.

This is bound to be true, as long as the medium through which war is presented to us remains a commercial enterprise. The stories will be built around interesting personalities. Luck will always favor the hero until the very end of the story—at which moment death may add to his stature. Comedy will bring its relief to an overstrained audience at just the right moment. The sum total of the picture will be appraised by the sensitive standard of the box office and war will remain, what it has been for thousands of years, something which entrances the mob the moment its immediate terror has been moderated or removed.

The time even comes when those who have suffered most from war are ready to parade their grief. We are even now witnessing the departures and arrivals in triumph of groups of Gold Star mothers—women who, instead of going quietly to mourn at the graves of their sons in France, gather on the docks in smiling groups to wave flags and be photographed. Perhaps they are to be pitied for seizing upon this trifling compensation. But their every action as a group indicates the desire for the spotlight and for the aura of the heroine. They have even forgotten the execrable taste of flaunting themselves before the mothers of a country bled to death—in France where nearly every home was emptied forever of parts of its youth. No. The jingoists have little to fear. War is rapidly becoming as popular today as ever in the history of man. Its futility, its injustice are forgotten in the hidden worship of action, of heroic deeds and of excitement.

In the case of The Dawn Patrol, the formula is more nearly that of Journey's End than of All Quiet on the Western Front. There is the same rebellion against war coupled with the same quiet submission to duty and the same bravery in the face of certain death. Once you forget the larger question and accept the war as a fact, it is a picture of high romantic thrill. I have never seen a picture in which the actual sensations of flight are caught more accurately. The battle scenes of the air are masterpieces of photography and arrangement. How they manage to crack up and burn up so many planes without actual loss of life is one of those mysteries which only Hollywood can solve.

The performances are all excellent, especially those of Richard Barthelmess as the squadron commander and of Douglas Fairbanks, jr., as his pal, Scotty. The scene in which Scotty's younger brother is killed on his first flight over the lines is something not easily forgotten.

As in Journey's End, there are no women in the cast. There is not even a single sentimental reference to women. On the other hand, the men themselves go a bit too sloppy on occasions

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—too much so, that is, to give the authentic feeling of the British Royal Flying Corps. Here and there one finds touches of humor, and a bit of that good sportsmanship between enemy fliers which one can charitably call one of the saving graces of the war. But to think that anything as tense and exciting as The Dawn Patrol can in any way obstruct the revivalists of jingoism is to entertain a false hope and to be blind to the perverse instincts of men themselves. The glamor of war is only heightened by showing what frightfulness and sufferings men can endure and still live.

### *Wild Company*

A FOX picture which is by no means as bad as its name, is Wild Company. It is, of course, the old story of the indulgent parents who are morally responsible for the troubles of their sons and daughters by not taking a firm hand early. It is not, fortunately, a tirade against the "younger generation," and, except for details, might just as well have been written fifty years ago. In it, the son of a wealthy department store owner, and important civic figure, gets tangled up with a group of gangsters and falls in love with a cabaret singer whom the chief gangster uses for sundry purposes. Melodrama develops before long, and the picture hurries through to a real climax, only to be dumped hard in the dénouement by a court room trick.

The trouble is that pictures of this general calibre can, and will, be turned out by the bushel basket. Whatever small wisp of importance they might claim is bound to come entirely from the actors and directors. In the present instance, Frank Albertson as the boy, Larry Grayson, who unwittingly gets involved in a robbery and a murder, gives a performance of real distinction. H. B. Warner as his father does likewise, except for two or three heavily overdrawn moments. The rest of the cast is no more than passable.

### *Music and the Movies*

FOR some reason, there has been considerable excitement lately concerning the alleged failure of the talking screen to do its duty by fine music. I am inclined to think that this is an entirely premature and unjustified attack. The talkies have only just emerged from the experimental stage, yet during the last year I have heard a large number of operatic stars of the first magnitude in the short number and have had the pleasure of listening to both Lawrence Tibbett and John McCormack in full length pictures. In view of the fact that radio has been carrying the work of several great symphony orchestras into millions of homes at the same time, it seems to me that the movies have been doing their share toward the general fund of musical education.

On the other hand, there is unquestionably a vast field which the movies have not yet explored—namely, the Wagnerian music dramas and the more robust works such as Boris Godounov and Ivan the Terrible. In presenting such works, where the dramatic action is not held up by the music, the screen could do an enormous service in giving them full and free imaginative settings. Operas of the older Italian school would be just a bit ridiculous on the screen. But since the time of Wagner, a new convention has been established which would certainly fit the screen requirements even more closely than musical comedy. Even Carmen, freely transcribed, or Pagliacci would make excellent story entertainment. Whether the movies will ever undertake such a task without outside subsidy from music lovers remains to be seen. But the possibility is there, ready to be grasped by a producer of courage and imagination.

# BOOKS

## Definitions of Freedom

*Liberty, by Everett Dean Martin. New York: W. W. Norton and Company. $3.00.*

ACCORDING to the announcement which accompanies the Book of the Month Club's choice, each judge came to meeting with the decision that this is the most important book which he has read this month or for some time past.

Quite likely it is, for it deals straight from the shoulder with the reversal of American ideals and ideas in this last century. The American experiment began on what might be called an aristocratic concept of democracy: the building up of a society of free men in which the citizen should develop to his highest individual possibility, with no artificial restrictions. Government in that society was devised to protect the "inalienable" rights of the individual against other individuals, groups, majorities and even against government itself. The American idea was the outgrowth of gains made in England accelerated here by pioneer conditions. Englishmen already convinced of the "rights of Englishmen" became even more convinced of the rights of the individual as they developed to be Americans, in a new country with plenty of room not to crowd each other. "The eighteenth century Englishman had learned how to put government where it belonged, and to keep it there."

With Andrew Jackson's social revolution we began to set up a proletarian theory of democracy in which the mass of humanity counts, not the individual. Rights of individuals are no longer considered. Whether in politics, education, business or religion, and whether the religious body be Catholic or Protestant, the individual today is suspect. At best he is a "crank"; at the worst he is a rebel or even "a dangerous radical." That is a complete reversal of what America was founded for by the people who took conscious part in the founding. Paradoxically this reversal with its passion for conformity grew out of the bosom of the nonconformist element of early Anglo-American citizenship. It was from nonconformists principally that the charter holders of great tracts of American soil settled their lands. It was upon these new freemen that the exponents in America of English gains in self-government and protection of individual rights based their great experiment.

The lower class of citizenship continued to be nonconformists in America, as they had been in England, and became impatient of the caution of those who were conducting the new experiment. With Andrew Jackson's revolutionary victory "the common masses" swept into supremacy. That struggle ended with the Civil War. Mr. Martin traces the various definitions of liberty that men have brought with them to America, and the reasons for this paradoxical phenomenon. He agrees with the More-Babbitt school that in great part the change came with the perversion of English political philosophy by the spread of Rousseau's false concept of man.

The Jacksonian victory was a revolution. It displaced the aristocratic democracy of the liberal Anglo-Saxon founders by an illiberal bigoted Anglo-Saxon lower class, supplemented later by proletarian mass immigration from the European continent who were not interested in English or American ideas of liberty but mainly in liberty to do as Henry Ford did later and make a billion dollar fortune in twenty-five years. In this new period the older part of the victorious mass became also interested in its new liberty to make everyone else conform

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to its own special pet bigotries, while the new part remained aloof until it began to find its strength. Narrowness, intolerance, bigotry and impatience of foundations of America, have grown on both sides, while each vociferates that it is the only exponent of "Americanism." The mob has become a more dangerous tyrant than any individual. We are ceasing to be free men and we do not care as long as we are prosperous. This thesis goes a long way to explain why the Democratic party contains such curiously incompatible elements. It might also show why it is so difficult for the Democratic party to win a national election, since most Democrats are bred in those very things out of which Republican doctrine grows.

It may not be known to all of The Commonweal's readers that Mr. Martin has been director of the Peoples' Institute at Cooper Union in New York for fifteen years. It is apparent in Liberty that he agrees to the general objectives of that school of humanism headed by More and Babbitt. The forum he chooses however is quite different, for in the Peoples' Institute he is addressing an audience composed very largely of workingmen coming from the conditions which have bred the remedial measure of Socialism.

WILLIAM FRANKLIN SANDS.

## A Statesman and His Daughter

*Mary Gladstone (Mrs. Drew), Her Diaries and Letters; edited by Lucy Masterman. New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, Incorporated. $6.00.*

IN MARY GLADSTONE'S diaries, which start against the background of the Franco-Prussian War, and "Mr. Gladstone's famous declaration on the neutrality of Belgium," the great Victorian Prime Minister remains the pivot of the circle wherein Mary stood beside him taking notes, until his death in 1898. In and out of that circle pass not only famous figures of his own generation, but countless younger ones drawn by the Lyttelton and Gladstone children into his life at Hawarden and at Downing Street. All of these, representing interests political and churchly, literary, musical and artistic, form a supporting chorus to his unfaltering utterances upon every subject that he treats from the "grandstand" on which his footing never seems to fail. And is there anything he does *not* treat? The range of conversation presided over by Gladstone is indicated by this typical extract: " . . . At tea a regular outflow of splendid talk from the P. M., causes of great movements, Rousseau, Voltaire, Burke's influence on French revolution, Dr. Dollinger, books that have most affected mankind. Butler how far appreciated. The four authors to choose as guides of life, Aristotle, Saint Augustine, Dante and Butler (W. E. G.)."

It is a record of vitality governed by high principles, of which any fond daughter might be proud. That Mary felt it so is unconcealed. The diary opens thus: " . . . [Papa] highly approves Lewes' Life of Goethe which is satisfactory. Goethe is the image of Dr. Kingsley. Odd. . . . I think Papa is rather like Shakespeare. I felt it while reading Carlyle's Hero Poets."

What sort of intellectual milieu was it in which Shakespeare and Mr. Gladstone seemed alike? Well, it made glorious promises to its own prophets, priests and poets, if we may judge from this dictum of Lord Acton (whom the circle seems to have regarded as the *profoundest* thinker it possessed) anent George Eliot's death: "In problems of life and thought wh. baffled Shakespeare disgracefully, her touch was unfailing. No writer ever lived who had anything like her power of manifold

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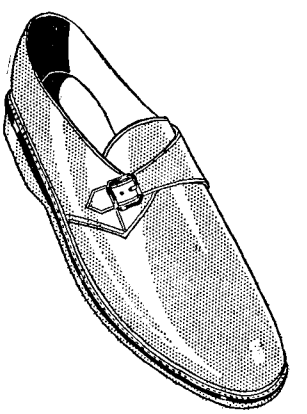

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and impartially observant sympathy. If Sophocles or Cervantes had lived in the light of our culture, if Dante had prospered like Manzoni, George Eliot might have had a rival."

That puts Victorian opinion in a nutshell. They knew their "culture" was the highest the world had so far seen, yet felt it but the herald of "some far-off divine event toward which the whole creation moved." For the group whose activities are portrayed in this record, progress toward the "divine event" lay in following, from the standpoint of Church of England orthodox belief, the course envisaged by their "grand, square and upright" leader in his faultless ministerial dress.

No people ever lived in mental fog more soothing to man's self-esteem. But when it lifted on a world of nations battling each for its selfish or sordid rights, these were the men who answered Gladstone's notion of what "English gentlemen" should do by taking arms to uphold the "neutrality of Belgium." With them has passed from sight something the world cannot afford to be without while it is searching for firm ground for fighting men to stand on "for the right."

MARGARET KENDALL.

## An Eighteenth-century Gentleman

*Lord Melbourne, by Bertram Newman. New York: The Macmillan Company. $4.50.*

WILLIAM LAMB, Lord Melbourne, was a statesman whose strength and whose shortcomings were peculiarly English. He was not brilliant in a superficial sense, he was largely devoid of passion, and his love of philosophy and abstract thought never led him to uphold the truth per se of any particular political or economic doctrine. In his private life he was a student, whose sombre reflectiveness rendered him gently cynical regarding the possibility of human perfectiveness, but this habit of mind did not prevent him, perhaps indeed it aided him, in controling for nearly ten years the destiny of a party composed of members of widely divergent beliefs and temperaments. He understood the necessity of compromise without being a time-server. At heart a gentleman of the eighteenth century, he yet saw that that age had passed, and setting aside his natural instincts he set himself the task of leading the young queen into the path which she followed so successfully through nearly three-quarters of a century. Unhappy in his married life yet loyal to the memory of the woman who had not only deceived him but made him ridiculous by her escapades with Lord Byron, yearning always for a certainty in religion and philosophy yet always baffled by it, a friend of Ireland, a worker in a slow English way for social reform, believing far less in anything than he would wish to believe, yet from the instinctive goodness of his nature acting beyond his beliefs, he comes down to us a particularly attractive figure.

Bertram Newman's Lord Melbourne is rather a monograph than a full-sized "life," yet the author of Cardinal Newman and of Edmund Burke has again proved himself one of the most accomplished and satisfying of living English biographers. Newman does not belong to the "new biographers." He never tries to make points for the sake of points, nor epigrams for the sake of epigrams, which usually means for the sake of the biographer. In Lord Melbourne he has a subject admirably suited for his sincere, concise manner. Newman is not a "brilliant" writer, no more than Melbourne was a "brilliant" statesman, and perhaps because of this had they been contemporaries Melbourne would have liked and understood Newman, just as his biographer likes and understands Melbourne.

GRENVILLE VERNON.

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## Briefer Mention

*The Selbys, by Anne Green. New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, Incorporated. $2.50.*

THE merry and inconsequential sister of a portentous and melancholy brother gives in this novel her version of Paris. Julian Green's Parisians are, for the most part, indigenous; Anne Green's are, for the most part, expatriated Americans; but it would be obviously unfair to find in this fact the reason for either the superior artistic and psychological merits of his work, or the superior power of amusement of hers. The Selbys have not much to recommend them to our serious attention: a racy family patter which they spin out in numberless entertaining dialogues; an incisive contempt for all other members of the American colony, which leads to the pinking of an occasional millionairess; a wide miscellaneous French acquaintance guaranteed to dispel a good many international illusions and a pretty niece whom (after a slip or two) they marry off to a nice, rich young Frenchman. But, imponderable though it all is, it is written with a feathery gaiety that is charming, and the book is practically alone of its kind in contriving to suggest, as from an outsider, that the French are actual human beings instead of ambulating intellects or monsters of recherché immorality.

*The Seventeenth Century, by G. N. Clark. Oxford: The Clarendon Press. $4.50.*

THE significance of the seventeenth century, not yet fully appreciated, is being more and more widely recognized. Mr. Clark, the Oriel College scholar whose essays in research are well known, now offers a topical survey of European history during the period. Separate chapters deal with population, finance, art and the many other departments of social life. This method, now gaining vogue, has its disadvantages but one thinks it enables the historian to place the right accent on details. Mr. Clark's book is remarkably comprehensive and judicious. Though the right nuance is not always found (thus our author fails to appreciate the purely psychological value of mediaeval and humanistic mysticism), one is surprised to see how frequently, in a book necessarily general, the note is just right (for example, the summary of Leibnitz, or the critique of post-Renaissance military strategy). Unfortunately, too, Mr. Clark is occasionally blind to religious values and more positivistic than we should desire. But on the whole this is the best available treatise on the whole of the seventeenth century.

*Cornered Poets, by Laurence Housman. New York: Jonathan Cape and Harrison Smith, Incorporated. $2.50.*

MR. HOUSMAN has fancy and the knack of giving it literary form—two possessions of which any man might well be proud. The present volume of dramatic dialogues is concerned with literary men who are collectively dubbed poets, though some wrote hardly an iambic line. Carlyle is shown exchanging conversational china with (and, of course, at) his wife. The poet Gray falls asleep in the country churchyard and has a dream. John Donne, meditating upon death, is interrupted by an anti-meditative housekeeper. Other sketches concern Burns, Wordsworth and Ninon de Lanclos. All are no less incisive than amusing, and will certainly appeal to persons seeking a way of taking literature naturally. The meat is served here with a rare wine sauce, which is very savory and also very good for the intellectual digestion.

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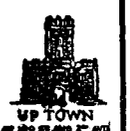


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*Tantalus, by Jo van Ammers-Küller; translated by G. J. Renier and Irene Clephane. New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, Incorporated. $2.50.*

THIS gifted and yet curiously limited Dutch novelist is already known here for her book, The Rebel Generation. The present work, less sensational, is the product of the same disillusionment. Its hero is a middle-aged romantic philanderer whose naive search for emotional fulfilment wrecks his soundly established and very satisfactory marriage, and leaves him in the end the victim of a brainless, characterless, passionate, possessive little adventuress. Mrs. Van Ammers-Küller has the gift of approaching the most sophisticated material humanly and simply, but she is evidently unable to supply either of the constituents which would give her story genuine drama and significance: a deeply conceived character, or a set of moral principles. The first is so rare in contemporary fiction that it may not be fair to insist on it. The absence of the second is really strange. In an author who has such a serious sense of the personal tragedies of the modern moral interregnum, and of the social importance of the problems it creates, it is hard to explain the lack of all knowledge, intuitive or historical, of how these problems must be met.

## CONTRIBUTORS

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